



## DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

*Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities*



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### RECENT PROGRESS IN THE JUAN F. EXIT PLAN

#### Meeting And Sustaining High Standards

- Exit Plan creates strict accountability and improved performance: The plan to end Federal Court jurisdiction creates 22 performance measures for the Department's work with children and families. The report for the Second Quarter 2006 shows DCF either met or came within three percentage points of meeting 18 of 20 outcomes measured in the quarter. Staff met 15 goals outright, came within one half of one percent in another, came within one and one half percent of another, and came within 3 percent on a final measure – missing that goal by a single child out of 31 applicable cases.
- Sustaining improvements: Four goals have been met for nine or more quarters, two goals for seven quarters, and five others have been met for three or four consecutive quarters.
- The following outcomes were met by the Department during the second quarter of 2006 (percentage point change from first quarter of 2004 or earliest measurement appears in parentheses):
  - (1) Timely commencement (5.2% improvement) and (2) completion (28.9% improvement) of investigations
  - (3) Search for relatives (0.8% improvement)
  - (4) Repeat maltreatment (2.4% improvement) and (5) maltreatment of children in out-of-home care (0.2% increase)
  - (6) Timely reunification (0.2% improvement) and (7) timely adoption (25.7% improvement)
  - (8) Stability of foster care placements (1% improvement)
  - (9) Foster parent training (steady at 100%)
  - (10) Regular worker-client visitation in in-home cases (48.4% improvement) and (11) out of home cases (13.6% improvement)
  - (12) Meeting caseload standards (26.9% improvement)
  - (13) Reduction in Residential Care Placements (3.1% improvement)
  - (14) Successfully meeting discharge measures (17% improvement)
  - (15) Timely multi-disciplinary exams (71.1% improvement)

#### Reasonable Caseloads

- Case Workers Meet Standard: Social workers have actual caseloads of between 15 to 20 cases, placing Connecticut in line with national Child Welfare League standards. Prior to the Consent Decree, according to anecdotal information, workers typically had caseloads of 40 to 60 cases

#### Timely Permanence: Adoption, Guardianship, Reunification

- Reducing the time children wait to be adopted: The percentage of children adopted in a timely manner increased significantly. Compared to the first quarter of 2004, the percentage of children adopted within 24 months nearly quadrupled in the second quarter of 2006. In five of the last six quarters, more than 30 percent of adoptions met the two-year timeline and in four of those quarters the Department exceeded the Exit Plan goal of 32 percent.
- More permanent homes: During State Fiscal Years 1997 to 2005, an average of 615 permanent homes (both adoptions and subsidized guardianships) were found annually for children in foster care -- more than four times the number in 1996. In FY2006, 498 adoptions were finalized and 308 subsidized guardianships granted for a total of 806 new permanent homes.
- Timely reunification: Reunifying children with parents also ensures permanency. In the second quarter of 2006, the Department exceeded the Exit Plan goal of completing 60 percent of reunifications within 12 months for the third consecutive quarter.

#### Appropriate Levels of Care for Children

- Since April 2004, the Department reduced the number of children in residential care by more than 26 percent – bringing the number to 650 or 239 fewer children over a 29-month period.
- Since September 2004, the Department has reduced the number of children in an out-of-state residential program by 39.5 percent. As of July 1, 2006, there were 194 fewer children in an out-of-state program compared to only 22 months ago. Approximately 65 percent of the children out of state are in treatment in Massachusetts, as of August 2006.
- Over 60 percent of children removed from their homes were first placed with relatives or non-relative foster homes. From 200-2005, the proportion of children placed in family-like settings increased from 65 percent to 71 percent (conventional foster homes increased from 48 percent to 54 percent and those placed with relatives increased from 11 percent to 17 percent).

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